



## United States Senate Budget Committee

**JEFF SESSIONS | Ranking Member**

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# As Economic Challenges Grow, Sessions Looks Back At Reagan Legacy On Role Of Government

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**WASHINGTON—U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL), Ranking Member of the Senate Budget Committee, today commemorated the 100th anniversary of the birth of Ronald Reagan and addressed our nation's financial and budgetary challenges.**

**Sessions' remarks, as prepared, follow. To view a video of Sessions' extended remarks, including his comments on spending reduction, please [click here](#).**

"Today, I rise to pay tribute to our 40th President, Ronald Reagan. This Sunday, February 6th, is the 100th anniversary of his birth. It is an opportunity for a whole nation to honor the memory of a man who honored all of us with his leadership.

As the 1980's began we were a weakened country. Inflation and unemployment were in the double-digits. The hostage crisis in Iran dragged on, with no end in sight. Our standing abroad was waning—and so too, was our military strength. Challenges at home were answered with one failed Washington program after another. We had lost confidence in our future, and in the principles that made us exceptional.

Ronald Reagan changed all of that. That change began with twelve simple but crucial words: "Government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem."

He stirred the passions of the country, revitalizing not only our economy but our identity as a free people. What some have called the Reagan Revolution he called the Great Rediscovery. He instilled us with a new confidence in our future and in America's role as "the last best hope of mankind."

His achievements are well known but they bear repeating. Working with Paul Volcker, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, he tamed the inflation that was robbing Americans of their life's work and savings. It was a tough course, but he saw it through—and we were stronger as a result.

He lowered taxes dramatically, including a reduction in the top rate from seventy percent to less than thirty. And he reined in a runaway bureaucracy that had trapped innovation and productivity in a labyrinth of regulation and red tape.

His faith in the free market was not misplaced. He created twenty million new jobs, grew our gross national product by twenty-six percent, and began the longest peacetime boom in our history. Conditions improved for Americans in every walk of life. The net worth of families earning between twenty and fifty thousand dollars rose by twenty-seven percent.

Reagan's stunning success debunked every myth of those who believe a bigger government is more compassionate.

And this success at home was matched by his success abroad. He defended our principles and our way of life with clarity, confidence, and vigor. His policies brought down the Soviet Empire and liberated untold millions.

Today, more than twenty years after Reagan left office, we find ourselves facing many of the same challenges—a sagging economy, a growing government, and a diminished standing in the world.

We would be wise to remember the lessons of that era. Peace through strength; prosperity through freedom. He understood that our future greatness lies in the same place it always has: through our pioneering, restless, enterprising spirit that is filled with ambition and excitement and a deep sense of honor and decency that defines who we are as people—and who we will be tomorrow.

In President Reagan's farewell address he issued a word of caution: "If we forget what we did, we won't know who we are. I am warning of an eradication of that—of the American memory that could result, ultimately, in an erosion of the American spirit."

So as we face the daunting, defining challenges of our time, I hope we will look back to the leadership Ronald Reagan provided."

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